

U.S. Department of Education
2012 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program
A Public School - 12MN2

School Type (Public Schools): ☐ Charter ☐ Title 1 ☐ Magnet ☐ Choice
(Check all that apply, if any)

Name of Principal: Ms. Nancy Benz

Official School Name: Hilltop Primary School

School Mailing Address: 5700 Game Farm Road
Minnetrista, MN 55364-8366

County: Hennepin County State School Code Number*: 616

Telephone: (952) 491-8501 E-mail: benzn@westonka.k12.mn.us

Fax: (952) 491-8503 Web site/URL: http://hilltop.westonka.k12.mn.us

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent*: Mr. Kevin Borg Superintendent e-mail: borgk@westonka.k12.mn.us

District Name: Westonka Public School District District Phone: (952) 491-8000

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. David Botts

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

**Non-Public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12MN2

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district _____ 2 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
(per district designation): _____ 1 Middle/Junior high schools
_____ 1 High schools
_____ 0 K-12 schools
_____ 4 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 11130

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	23	20	43		6	0	0	0
K	45	44	89		7	0	0	0
1	40	41	81		8	0	0	0
2	46	34	80		9	0	0	0
3	47	48	95		10	0	0	0
4	43	39	82		11	0	0	0
5	0	0	0		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								470

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
2 % Asian
2 % Black or African American
1 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
93 % White
2 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 5%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	14
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	7
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	21
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	398
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.05
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	5

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 1%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 1

Number of non-English languages represented: 3

Specify non-English languages:

Russian, Danish and Laotian

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 20%

Total number of students who qualify: 86

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 15%

Total number of students served: 65

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>18</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>5</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>2</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>19</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>2</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>2</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>8</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>19</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>10</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>11</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
Total number	<u>31</u>	<u>17</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 21:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other	_____ %
Total	_____ 0%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

☒ No

☐ Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

PART III - SUMMARY

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Hilltop Primary School is regarded as a high-performing school which focuses on student and education excellence. The school is known as having a dedicated staff that believes in individual instruction for all students, and an educational program that promotes individual growth and high expectations.

Located in Minnetrista, Minnesota, Hilltop Primary School is home to 427 students in Grades K – 4, as well as 52 Preschool students. Hilltop Primary School follows the Westonka School District vision of an innovative school modeling educational excellence. Many of the students at Hilltop Primary School are children and grandchildren of residents who also attended Hilltop or one of the other Westonka Schools, which allows for vested interest from the community. School Spirit is strong throughout the school and many events are promoted throughout the year to encourage pride and dedication to the school and district.

Parents are a key role in the school academics, culture and atmosphere. The PTA promotes many key activities to promote educational excellence through activities such as an Imagination Fair featuring student artwork, an Operetta to promote musical talents, Artist in Residence to promote scientific skills, and an Adventures in Art program, which is a collaboration with the Minnesota Art Institute. PTA volunteers also promote strong school-family relationships by bringing students, parents, community and staff together for Grandfriends' Day, Octoberfest, and Family Fun Night.

Hilltop Primary School's Character Education Program focuses on the Six Pillars of Education of Respect, Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship. Student modeling of the traits are celebrated monthly at the whole school assembly and through the weekly "Caught being Good" lunch table. Lessons are taught weekly by the classroom teachers and the students also meet with the principal bi-weekly to discuss the Pillars of Education.

The Environmental Education Program is a collaboration effort with local agencies including Three Rivers Park District, Rainbow Tree Care and the Tree Trust Program. During the Fall 2011 school year, Hilltop Primary School received a grant to provide an arboretum and outdoor classroom on the school grounds. The school now has four outdoor classrooms along with a 19-acre piece of land that are used for an instructional setting.

An exceptional Gifted and Talented program challenges high-ability students in grades K – 4 through activities such as Continental Math League, WordMasters, Geography Bee, Creativity Festival, Young Authors, and Young Scientist Roundtable. During the 2010 – 2011 school year, Hilltop Primary School started an Accelerated Mathematics Program for students in Grades 3 – 4. This program allows students to complete three years of mathematics in a two year period.

A vibrant Community Education program offers additional afterschool programs enrichment programs that focus on science, visual and performing arts, reading and foreign language. A Spanish program is offered before school for all students.

21st Century Skills are a focus in the areas of technology, higher order thinking skills, critical thinking, and problem solving. The areas are focused on during staff meetings, Professional Development days, and through the bi-weekly School Improvement Team Meetings. Hilltop Primary School has incorporated iPads, iPods, a mobile laptop cart, and two stationary computer labs into the school setting for educational use of personalizing instruction. In addition, all classrooms have an interactive whiteboard and a sound system for enhanced learning for all students.

The Wellness Initiative has been integrated in the school by movement in the classroom and healthy snacks throughout the school. Hilltop Primary School has received the Hennepin County Wellness – Gold Level Award during the 2010 – 2011 school year.

By delivering high academic achievement as measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), nurturing strong relationships with the community, and providing a safe learning environment with high expectations for all students, we believe Hilltop Primary School models the qualities of a Blue Ribbon School.

1. Assessment Results:

Hilltop Primary School uses two different standardized assessment results to measure student progress in reading and mathematics: The Northwest Evaluation Assessment (NWEA) and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA's). The NWEA assessments are administered two times per year to students in Grades 1 – 4 in reading and mathematics. The MCA's are administered one time per year in April to Grades 3 and 4 in reading and mathematics. In Kindergarten, teachers use ongoing formative assessments that focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, number relationships, number sense and geometric shapes to track student achievement.

The MCA's have four levels of performance: Level 1 – Below Level, Level 2 – Developing, Level 3 – Proficient and Level 4 – Exceeds the standard. The combined results of Level 3 and Level 4 comprise the school's percentage of students meeting state standards in reading and mathematics.

Hilltop Primary School prides itself on providing an education where students meet and exceed the standards. We pride ourselves in students not only meeting the standards, but exceeding the standards in reading and mathematics.

The following data includes Hilltop Primary School's 2010 – 2011 Spring NWEA and MCA results:

Grade 1 Reading

NWEA Spring Average Score: 182 (National Average: 171)

Grade 1 Mathematics

NWEA Spring Average Score: 185 (National Average: 177)

Grade 2 Reading

NWEA Spring Average Score: 199 (National Average: 189)

Grade 2 Mathematics

NWEA Spring Average Score: 198 (National Average: 191)

Grade 3 Reading

NWEA Spring Average Score: 206 (National Average: 199)

MCA-II: 95% met state standards (State Average 54%)

MCA-II: 71% at Level 4 Exceeding Standard (State Average: 54%)

Grade 3 Mathematics

NWEA Spring Average Score: 212 (National Average: 203)

MCA-III: 91% met state standards (State Average 70%)

MCA-III: 49% at Level 4 Exceeding Standard (State Average: 29%)

Grade 4 Reading

NWEA Spring Average Score: 210 (National Average: 206)

MCA-II: 95% met state standards (State Average 75%)

MCA-II: 56% at Level 4 Exceeding Standard (State Average: 38%)

Grade 4 Mathematics

NWEA Spring Average Score: 219 (National Average: 212)

MCA-III: 91% met state standards (State Average 67%)

MCA-III: 58% at Level 4 Exceeding Standard (State Average: 31%)

2. Using Assessment Results:

Hilltop Primary School regularly analyzes assessment results for critical information that can enhance student learning. This allows teachers to individualize instruction focusing on the strengths and weaknesses by strand, and to analyze overall growth data on a student. Teachers use the assessment data to adjust instruction and to provide additional support and rigor in the instructional setting.

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) provide summative data on student performance, measuring student learning that occurred during the school year. Since the MCA results are released during the summer months, they are used to review instructional practices, curriculum, and identify strengths and weaknesses in student mastery of concepts. Trend data is used for teacher reflection and teachers identify if there are certain strands that are weak. Teachers then adjust curriculum and pedagogy accordingly.

Hilltop Primary School is a Professional Learning Community (PLC) and teachers meet weekly to discuss ongoing formative assessments linked to student learning. The PLC's allow teachers to focus on specific skills for intervention teaching or identify students that can receive further enrichment instruction. Flexible grouping is used in the areas of mathematics and reading. Students may move weekly or monthly amongst the groups depending on their mastery level in the instruction.

Teachers also develop a SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented, and Timely) at the beginning of the year. The SMART goal is a schoolwide goal that gives the entire school community a common focus with academic achievement. SMART goals are reviewed at the bi-weekly School Improvement Team (SIT) meetings to look at the number of students that have received proficiency in the SMART goal area.

We believe that our continuous use of data-driven instruction is one of the key drivers of dramatic student achievement increases on local and state assessments.

Communicating Assessment Results:

Hilltop Primary School staff believes that it is important to communicate assessment results to students, parents and the community. Parent-student-teacher conferences are held twice a year to review academic progress, growth in the academic areas, and social/emotional needs. Teachers use goal-setting with the students and parents for monitoring of progress throughout the year. The district curriculum is aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards. The report cards, which are sent home at the end of every trimester, indicate the level of proficiency towards the academic standards. NWEA scores, MCA scores, fluency assessments, and curriculum-based measurement results are shared with parents through e-mails, report cards, phone calls, mailings and conferences.

The Westonka School District is also accountable to our community. The Westonka Annual report is used throughout the community to share assessment results of our students. In addition, the data is shared through local newspapers, on the district website, in various print publications (newsletters), in realtor packets, new student orientation packets, and in face-to-face meetings with the public.

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

Teacher collaboration and sharing of successes is one of the aspects behind the Professional Learning Framework (PLCs). By the nature of the PLC's, grade level teams, as well as the building structure of a small community, allow teachers to share their successes, their talents, and their findings on a weekly basis. At Hilltop Primary School, our staff takes pride in knowing every child's name throughout the school and helping every child achieve. Our teachers go above and beyond the regular school day to meet the needs of the students by teaching Community Education classes or providing additional education supports through the before school Targeted Services academic program.

Hilltop Primary School teachers also collaborate with our sister elementary school throughout the school year. This collaboration allows for teachers to share a common vision, mission, and high performance goals for the children. Teachers meet regularly during professional development days to discuss curriculum, instruction, and assessments. The teachers review power benchmarks and analyze assessments, which allows for monitoring and development of instruction.

The Hilltop Primary School staff uses interactive technology to improve teaching and learning in the classroom setting and to personalize instruction for all students. We focus on improving instruction and student learning by incorporating best practices of technology use in to the classroom. The district has provided time and professional development for teachers to share their technology instructional practices with their colleagues during the school year.

District and school administrators meet on a weekly basis to discuss teaching, curriculum, best practices and plans for continued progress on the PLC initiative. The administrators and the teaching staff also collaborate with the consortium district, District 287, to share ideas, information, curriculum, professional development, and best practices in education.

In addition, Hilltop Primary School hosts many events to share successes with our community and parents. These events include Book Fairs, Choir Concerts, Science Fairs, Earth Day, and Kindergarten Round-Up; all of these events provide an opportunity to share our goals, vision, and accomplishments during the school year.

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Hilltop Primary School teachers and staff believe that it is important to engage our families and community members with student learning. There are many activities during the school year to keep our parents informed about the student learning and progress. Teachers construct weekly parent newsletters to discuss the curriculum goals for the week. The curriculum goals are directly aligned to the Minnesota Academic Benchmarks for each grade level. Once a week, a school wide e-mail is also sent to the families to discuss the goals, benchmarks, and other significant information of the school. These e-mails focus on the school SMART goal and the progress towards the SMART goal.

Parents and community members are invited to programs during the school year including: music, art, science fair, curriculum mornings, Operetta, and Imagination Celebrations. Throughout these various family and community nights, students are able to show the results and academic benchmarks that they are working on and their progress with reaching proficiency.

In addition, each grade level team hosts a curriculum meeting for the parents in the fall. The curriculum meetings focus on the Minnesota Academic Standards and discuss the benchmarks and levels that the children need to reach in each grade level. Student progress towards the Minnesota Academic Standards is discussed at parent teacher conferences twice per year.

Since Kindergarten is a new beginning for our families, the Kindergarten teachers also meet with parents individually or in a small group the first two days of school. This allows the teachers to discuss Kindergarten academic standards, goals, and processes for the parents.

We also have a highly involved parent and community member population that volunteers at our school during the school day. These volunteers work with students in reading and mathematics skills to help strengthen the skill level of the students. Currently, Hilltop Primary School has fifty-four weekly volunteers that average about 1.5 hours per person. In a current month, 324+ volunteer hours are given to the students at Hilltop Primary School. In addition, Hilltop has 7 high school volunteers that come daily for one hour to work with students on reading and mathematics.

It is important at Hilltop that we utilize our parents and community members in the educational process and setting. We feel that this is vital for our students' learning and academic progress.

1. Curriculum:

The Hilltop Primary School curriculum provides the students with foundational skills in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, music, physical education, art, and technology. All content areas are aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards.

The language arts curriculum provides a balanced literacy program which includes phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. The language arts program also has writing integrated within the program using a *Six Traits of Writing* methodology. The program is research-based and aligns with the Minnesota Academic Standards. The skill areas spiral throughout the grade levels, which provide ongoing learning and acquiring the skill at a higher level. Whole group instruction, flexible grouping, and guided reading/small group instruction methods are incorporated into the 120-minute reading block.

The mathematics curriculum is scientifically research-based and is aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Standards (NCTM). It contains the following strands of mathematics: number sense, computation, geometry, data analysis, and mathematical reasoning. The core mathematics program uses whole group, small group, intervention, and manipulative instruction.

Science instruction revolves around the belief that students learn best by engaging in meaningful experience in our surrounding and natural world. The science program focuses on the scientific principles of observation, measurement, classification, inferring, hypothesis, and communication. Students use hands-on learning throughout the science curriculum sub-skill areas. Engineering curriculum is also incorporated at each grade level.

A comprehensive social studies program challenges students to process new knowledge through higher-order thinking skills. The curriculum uses multiple intelligence teaching strategies, focusing on critical thinking and understanding. Teachers help students connect what they are learning in class with their own individualized prior knowledge and experiences. Key units include: geography, citizenship, economics, government, world national, state history and current events.

The Hilltop music program uses Kodaly and Orff-Schulwerk methodology in all grade levels. The key strands in music include rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and timbre. Each grade level is involved in one music performance for friends, family and community each year. In addition, every third year students have an opportunity to perform in a school musical, *The Operetta*, which focuses on performance, singing, and acting. Students in Grades 3 and 4 also learn the recorder and demonstrate their ability through a concert in the Spring. Grade 2 and 4 students gain valuable musical experience by participating in the *Young People's Concert* at the Minnesota Orchestra Hall.

Art is an important aspect for students at Hilltop Primary School. The curriculum focuses on the elements of art including: form, line, texture, shape, space, color, and tone. The art program is a disciplined-based art program where students develop abilities to understand and appreciate art. Each unit of study has a learned concept from four content areas of art criticism, art history, art making and aesthetics. The National Standards of Art Education and the Minnesota Standards for Visual Arts are incorporated within the art curriculum.

Physical Education is also an essential part of a student's educational experience, contributing to the total fitness, growth, and development of each student. The Kindergarten – Grade 4 physical education program includes physical fitness, cognitive awareness, physical skills, and social interaction. Many

cooperative activities and cardiovascular activities are practiced to provide a basis for further exercise later in life.

Students attend technology integration classes every other day. The curriculum is based on the Minnesota Academic Standards of Information and Technology Standards. The technology curriculum uses inquiry, research, and problem solving to promote questioning, gathering, synthesizing, evaluating and use of information to gain new knowledge. Students are exposed to multiple technologies and applications and extend the tools to the Minnesota Academic Standards in all content areas.

2. Reading/English:

The language arts curriculum provides a balanced literacy program including phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. The language arts program also has writing integrated within the program using a *Six Traits of Writing* methodology. The program is research-based and aligns with the Minnesota Academic Standards. The skill areas spiral throughout the grade levels, which provide ongoing learning and acquiring the skill at a higher level.

Teachers use whole class instruction, flexible grouping and guided reading during the core reading block. A guided reading library houses over 200 titles for teachers to use with the children in the area of reading. During the reading block, students work on the *Daily Five* areas in reading instruction, which includes: reading to self, reading to someone, writing, listening to reading and word work. All of the *Daily Five* areas focus on the five core areas of reading.

The core reading block consists of a 120-minute block; during this time teachers use flexible grouping to meet the needs of all students. For students that are at or above level, material is provided to extend their levels. For students that are below level, additional word work and comprehension skill learning is used for self-monitoring and fix-it-up strategies.

Teachers use screening assessments, progress monitoring assessments, diagnostic assessments and summative assessments for students in all grade levels. All students are screened at the beginning of the year for reading deficiencies and a progress-monitoring plan is then formulated for the child. Summative assessments are conducted at the end of the year to monitor growth of a child in the various reading areas.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics curriculum is standards and research-based. It contains the following strands of mathematics: number sense, computation, geometry, data analysis, and mathematical reasoning.

Instructional methods include whole class, small group, and individualized instruction to meet all of the student needs. SMARTboard lessons have been created to enhance the teaching of mathematics to the students. Through the SMARTboard lessons, teachers use graphic manipulatives to develop the concepts from the concrete to the abstract.

Teachers and staff also use manipulatives to work with the students on the concrete levels of new mathematics concepts. Students use manipulatives in small group structure to work on problem solving skills in the math strand areas.

An additional intervention time is provided for students below, at and above grade level. This intervention time is planned according to the data and observations through the Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings that occur weekly. Through the intervention time, teachers can pinpoint key skills for students and work with them on closing the gap in understanding and towards mastery of those skills.

Students also use *Skills Tutor*, a mathematical technology program, that allows students to work at their own level in mathematics. Through this program, students take pretests and additional practice or extension is given accordingly. Students also have access to this program at home.

During the school year, an additional "before school" class is provided for all Grade 3 and 4 students who are below level in mathematics. This class provides additional help for students in small group setting.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The hands-on science curriculum is aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards. The science curriculum focuses on the strands of science: Life Science, Physical Science, Earth Science, Engineering, Scientific Reasoning, and Technology. Through the science investigations students learn to think critically and gain experience in applying what they learned using written and communication skills. Children use the scientific processes of observing, communicating, comparing, organizing, relating, inferring, and applying.

Hilltop Primary School also has added environmental education within the science strands and processes. Currently, there are four outdoor classrooms on the school grounds and a 19-acre forest plot within one block of the school to use for science investigations. In collaboration with Three Rivers Park District, a naturalist works directly with the teachers and students on incorporating the science standards into the outdoor education. Through this philosophy, students have the opportunity to learn science through real world, hands-on learning.

In May, fourth grade students also participate in a week-long environmental camp to Wolf Ridge in Ely, Minnesota. Wolf Ridge is an accredited Kindergarten – Grade 12 environmental school and residential learning center. Through the program, students are immersed in nature exploration, cultural history, and outdoor skills. The program uses many hands-on activities that incorporate multiple learning styles.

A Science Fair is provided for all students annually at Hilltop. The Science Fair focuses on the strands of science and allows all students to share and show their talents in science education. The students follow the science fair process of research, Big Idea question, hypothesis, trials, and conclusions. The Science Fair is one of the highlights in the Spring every year.

Hilltop Primary School's mission is to provide an innovative education for student learning with a focus on 21st Century Skills and college readiness. Through our science program, our students are prepared for the future using 21st Century Skills of critical thinking, problem solving, higher order thinking, creativity and innovation, and communication skills. The science education program at Hilltop promotes all of these skills and allows students to explore, learn and develop their own understanding of science.

5. Instructional Methods:

Various instructional methods are used in the classroom to meet the needs of all learners. Students are placed in small groups and large groups based on the formative assessment results that are discussed between teachers at the Professional Learning Committee (PLC) meetings. Students are also placed into below, at or above level intervention classes in both reading and mathematics to provide additional time in learning. The intervention time focuses on concrete to abstract learning towards the Minnesota Academic Standards.

Interactive whiteboards are used in every classroom throughout the school. In addition, iPads, iPod Touches, a mobile lab, and two stationary computer labs are used to enhance student learning and provide individualized instruction for all learners.

The PLC weekly meeting structure allows for teachers to analyze student formative assessment data. The PLC meeting structure creates a safe environment for developing new instructional methods in which to

identify which teaching methods are productive and directly affect student learning. All teachers also have common daily planning time, which allows teams of teachers to meet on lesson plans, SMARTgoals, and academic standards. Team conversations focus on improving teaching strategies about instructional strategies that work to improve student achievement. The process encourages teachers to grow and improve as instructors.

6. Professional Development:

The Westonka Professional Development Committee adopts a staff development plan to improve student achievement and support the educational outcomes. The Hilltop Primary School staff development plan is aligned to the district plan and incorporates best practices to enhance adult learning.

The focus of the Westonka Professional Development is to: 1) Improve student achievement through best practices, 2) Meet the needs of at-risk children, children with disabilities, and gifted children within the regular classroom, 3) Improve staff collaboration, 4) Develop mentoring and peer coaching programs for teachers, and 5) To promote and implement the district vision and academic goals.

Professional development is developed through teacher surveys and the Hilltop School Improvement Team (SIT). The goals of professional development are followed and trainings are provided to the staff through small group, large group, web-based, and self-learner programs. The Hilltop SIT team guides grade level teams with constant focus on increasing student learning and achievement. The SIT team is also responsible also for further implementation of the Professional Learning Committees (PLC) and the focus on assessments, benchmarks within curriculum, intervention and student achievement.

During the 2011 – 2012 school year, the focus for staff development has been on the student learner. Several staff development sessions have been offered throughout the school year including, *Will Richardson and the 21st Century Learner*, diverse learners and their needs, 21st Century Skills in the classroom, and the Minnesota Academic standards in mathematics. In addition, Westonka District is currently in the review cycle for adoption of a new mathematics series. Teachers have spent numerous hours aligning different mathematics series to the Minnesota Academic Standards, which has provided an in-depth look at the mathematics standards and mathematical instructional strategies.

Our high expectations for student achievement and our staff development plan becomes an all-encompassing plan for all student learners. Student achievement is monitored through the growth data on NWEA assessments from fall to Spring, and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. Ongoing formative assessments are also given weekly to students to measure their progress. As gaps in achievement are noted, the PLC structure allows teachers to identify the need for additional staff development opportunities to close the gap and increase student achievement.

7. School Leadership:

Leadership is critical to guide a school to continue to grow and create a common vision so that everyone is working together to provide the best learning environment for all students. The principal's role is to build a cohesive staff that forms common bonds in order to promote student achievement. The principal believes in the leadership traits of honesty, competency, forward-looking, fair-minded, courageous, inspiring and imaginative. All of these traits are important to keep an organization moving forward.

The structure within the school is three-fold. Staff meetings are used where whole group discussions can occur, School Improvement Team (SIT) where smaller conversations can have an in-depth focus, and Professional Learning Communities (PLC) where teachers can collaborate together for student achievement. The role of the principal is to guide the conversations and to develop a common vision for the staff.

The principal monitors policy implementation through the staff meetings and SIT team. These policies are reviewed and discussed at greater length to ensure standardization across the school. All conversations are linked to student achievement and the impact on learning.

Programs are on a continuous review cycle throughout the district. The review cycle allows for every content area to be thoroughly reviewed every six years. Best Practices are a key conversation point throughout all of the review cycles. It is important that our curriculum is current, relevant and shows that it makes an impact on student achievement.

Relationships between the staff and community are naturally built with a common vision of student achievement, innovative teaching, and resources. The staff at Hilltop Primary School develops a common vision yearly for innovative teaching and academic achievement. In the past years, whiteboards, sound systems, iPads, iPods, and a mobile laboratory have been incorporated into Hilltop Primary School to personalize student learning. A common vision on relationship building and resources shapes innovative teaching for student achievement.

Many staff lead in many different ways throughout the school. This is done through curriculum development, PTA, teaching methodologies, archery program and extracurricular activities. The combination of everyone sharing in the common vision of the school and the school leadership guiding the discussions is directly linked to increased student achievement.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3

Test: MCA-II and III

Edition/Publication Year: Modified Annually Publisher: Minnesota Department of Education (Pearson)

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 and 4	91	96	100	95	93
Level 4	49	81	74	62	61
Number of students tested	73	70	68	54	69
Percent of total students tested	96	97	94	98	95
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	2	4	1	4
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	3	6	2	5
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level 3 and 4	87				82
Level 4	20				41
Number of students tested	15	6		6	17
2. African American Students					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested			2	2	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested	1		1	1	
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 and 4		100	100		82
Level 4		92	77		41
Number of students tested	1	12	14	1	17
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level 3 and 4					0
Level 4					0
Number of students tested					1
6.					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
The MCA-II was used in 2006 - 2010. The MCA-III was used in 2010 - 2011 to align to the new Minnesota Academic Standards.					

12MN2

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3

Test: MCA-II

Edition/Publication Year: Modified Annually Publisher: Minnesota Department of Education (Pearson)

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Levels 3 and 4	95	90	99	87	95
Level 4	71	81	80	67	73
Number of students tested	73	70	66	54	66
Percent of total students tested	96	97	93	98	90
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	2	5	1	7
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	3	7	2	10
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Levels 3 and 4	87		100		94
Level 4	53		73		53
Number of students tested	15	6	15	6	17
2. African American Students					
Levels 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested			2	2	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Levels 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested	1		1	1	
4. Special Education Students					
Levels 3 and 4		92	100		93
Level 4		83	69		43
Number of students tested	8	12	13	9	14
5. English Language Learner Students					
Levels 3 and 4					0
Level 4					0
Number of students tested					1
6.					
Levels 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12MN2

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4

Test: MCA-II and III

Edition/Publication Year: Modified Annually Publisher: Minnesota Department of Education (Pearson)

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 and 4	91	100	85	89	90
Level 4	58	79	60	61	58
Number of students tested	74	66	55	75	76
Percent of total students tested	96	91	95	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	3	4	3	1	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	6	5	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level 3 and 4		100		83	
Level 4		62		50	
Number of students tested	7	13	6	18	4
2. African American Students					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested			1	1	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested		1	1		2
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 and 4			100	70	55
Level 4			36	39	27
Number of students tested	8	7	11	23	11
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					
The MCA-II was used in Minnesota from 2006 - 2010. In 2011, the MCA-III was used to align with the new Mathematics standards.					

12MN2

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4

Test: MCA-II

Edition/Publication Year: Modified Annually Publisher: Minnesota Department of Education (Pearson)

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
Level 3 and 4	95	95	94	85	93
Level 4	56	63	67	53	61
Number of students tested	73	64	58	75	76
Percent of total students tested	95	91	89	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	4	4	7	1	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	5	6	10	1	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Level 3 and 4		85		89	
Level 4		46		50	
Number of students tested	7	13		18	4
2. African American Students					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested			5	1	
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested		1	1		1
4. Special Education Students					
Level 3 and 4				70	73
Level 4				39	36
Number of students tested	7	7	7	23	11
5. English Language Learner Students					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
6.					
Level 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested					
NOTES:					

12MN2

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Levels 3 and 4	91	97	93	91	91
Level 4	53	80	67	61	59
Number of students tested	147	136	123	129	145
Percent of total students tested	96	94	94	98	97
Number of students alternatively assessed	6	6	7	2	5
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	4	5	1	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Levels 3 and 4	91	94		83	85
Level 4	31	68		54	47
Number of students tested	22	19	6	24	21
2. African American Students					
Levels 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested	0	0	3	3	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Levels 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested	1	1	2	1	2
4. Special Education Students					
Levels 3 and 4		100	100	70	71
Level 4		84	58	38	35
Number of students tested	9	19	25	24	28
5. English Language Learner Students					
Levels 3 and 4	0	0	0	0	0
Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	1
6.					
Levels 3 and 4	0	0	0	0	0
Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12MN2

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Levels 3 and 4	95	92	96	85	93
Level 4	63	72	73	58	66
Number of students tested	146	134	124	129	142
Percent of total students tested	95	94	91	98	94
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	6	12	2	8
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	4	8	1	5
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Levels 3 and 4	91	84	100	83	95
Level 4	49	57	73	50	47
Number of students tested	22	19	15	24	21
2. African American Students					
Levels 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested	0	0	7	3	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Levels 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested	1	1	2	1	1
4. Special Education Students					
Levels 3 and 4	86	94	94	72	84
Level 4	53	78	64	37	39
Number of students tested	15	19	20	32	25
5. English Language Learner Students					
Levels 3 and 4					
Level 4					
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	1
6.					
Levels 3 and 4	0	0	0	0	0
Level 4	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	0	0	0	0	0
NOTES:					

12MN2